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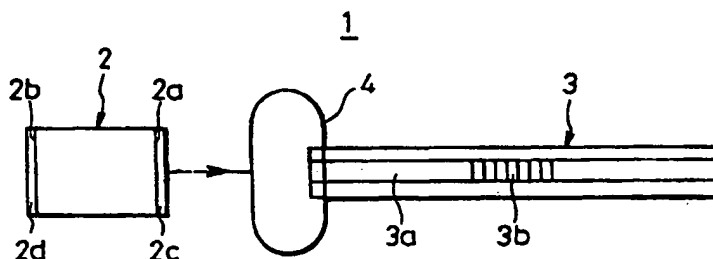
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(54) SEMICONDUCTOR LASER MODULE

(57) A semiconductor laser module 1 comprising a semiconductor laser device 2 having an emitting surface 2a from which excited light is emitted and a reflecting surface 2b opposite to the emitting surface, and an optical feedback medium 3 for feeding most of optical power emitted from the emitting surface 2a of the semiconductor laser device 2 back to the semiconductor laser device 2 by coupling means 4 and emitting part of the optical power. The semiconductor laser device 2 has

a low reflectance multilayer coating 2c formed on the emitting surface 2a and having a reflectance of 10^{-4} to 10%. The low reflectance multilayer coating 2c has a reflection spectrum in the form of a curve having a maximum value at the central wavelength of reflection and minimum values on both sides of the central wavelength of reflection.

FIG. 12

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Description**Technical Field**

- 5 [0001] The present invention relates to a semiconductor laser module for emitting a laser beam, and more specifically to a semiconductor laser module for an erbium doped fiber amplifier (EDFA) pumping purpose.

Background Art

- 10 [0002] Conventionally, in order to stabilize the wavelength of light emitted from an emitting device, optical feedback method is generally used such that the light emitted from a multimode emission laser is partially reflected back to the laser thereby make the emission wavelength of the laser constant.

- [0003] For examples, a semiconductor distributed feed back (DFB) laser, a distributed bragg reflector (DBR) laser, etc. belong to this classification. The DFB laser is a laser in which a diffraction grating is formed in an active layer of a semiconductor laser device. The DBR laser is a laser in which a reflecting diffraction grating which is, unlike an active layer, transparent in connection with emitted light is formed in a semiconductor laser device along its waveguide portion made of a semi-conducting medium, so that light may be reflected (fed back) to an active layer.

- [0004] Further, in recent years, a fiber bragg grating, that is, an optical fiber whose core has a refractive index varied in its axial direction so that the optical fiber may have a function of optical diffraction is developing rapidly, and lasers using various fiber bragg gratings are already disclosed. For example, Bulletin No. OPE97-1 of Society of Electronic Information and Communication discloses a "fiber grating external resonator type multiwavelength laser array" by Kato et al., and Bulletin No. OPE97-2 thereof discloses a "UV induced waveguide grating and application thereof to an integrated external resonator type laser" by Tanaka et al.

- [0005] Further, Atsushi Hamakawa et al. have reported on a technique of using an FBG to stabilize the emission wavelength of a 1480nm-band pump laser which is to be used as a light source for EDFA pumping, in the 2nd Optoelectronics & Communications Conference (OECC '97), Technical Digest, July 1997, Seoul, Korea (classification 9D2-5, pages 224 to 225).

- [0006] However, the above mentioned emitting devices such as the DFB laser and the DBR laser have a single mode emission spectrum. They are used exclusively for communication and not suitable for amplifying an EDFA.

- 30 [0007] Further, the above mentioned external resonator type lasers disclosed by Kato et al. and Tanaka et al. have the following problems.

- 1) Those external resonator type lasers are signal mode emission lasers, and mode hop, that is, a shift of central wavelength of emission happens when operating temperature changes by several degrees [C]. Thus, the stability of emission wavelength under change of temperature is low.

- 2) In those external resonator type lasers, the distance between an emitting surface of a laser device and a diffraction grating for optical feedback, which constitute an external resonator, is short. The process of assembling a module is therefore troublesome and needs special means such as a lensed fiber, flat mounting and the like. In other words, it is difficult to form the above mentioned external resonator type lasers using a two-lens compound confocal coupling system as used in an ordinary Fabry-Perot laser diode or an ordinary pump laser diode.

- 3) Output power of those external resonator type lasers is low. Therefore, they are not suited to be a light source for exciting an EDFA.

- 45 [0008] Further, the above mentioned technique on which Atsushi Hamakawa et al. have reported has the following problems though it is suitable for exciting an EDFA:

- 1) It needs to use, as a diffraction grating, a special fiber bragg grating capable of reflecting light of two different wavelengths.

- 2) Mode hop due to change of operating temperature is relatively small, but there still happens mode hop of about 2.6nm.

- [0009] The present invention has been made in consideration of the above problems. The object of the present invention is to provide a semiconductor laser module which has high power, shows high stability of emission wavelength under change of temperature, and is suited to be a light source for exciting an EDFA.

Disclosure of the Invention

- [0010] In order to attain the above object, the present invention provides a semiconductor laser module comprising a

semiconductor laser device having an emitting surface from which excited light is emitted and a reflecting surface opposite to the emitting surface, and an optical feedback medium for feeding most of optical power emitted from the emitting surface of the semiconductor laser device back to the semiconductor laser device and emitting part of the optical power, wherein the semiconductor laser device has a first multilayer coating formed on the emitting surface and having a reflectance of 10^{-4} to 10% at the central wavelength of reflection, and the first multilayer coating has a reflection spectrum in the form of a curve having minimum values on both sides of the central wavelength of reflection.

[0011] In this semiconductor laser module according to the present invention, mode hop, that is, a shift of central wavelength of emission, caused by operating temperature of the semiconductor laser device itself is restrained.

[0012] Specifically, in an ordinary laser, light is reflected using a reflection reducing coating which does not have wavelength selectivity and has a flat reflection spectrum. For example, in a 1480nm-band multimode emission semiconductor laser module, when the operating temperature changes within the range of 5 to 65°C, the central wavelength of emission spectrum shifts to the extent of about 30nm at most.

[0013] In contrast thereto, in the semiconductor laser module of the present invention, the semiconductor laser device has, for example, a dielectric multilayer coating formed on its emission surface, and the dielectric multilayer coating has a reflection spectrum in the form of a curve having minimum values on both sides of the central wavelength of reflection and has a reflectance of 10^{-4} to 10% at the central wavelength of reflection. Therefore, in the semiconductor laser module of the present invention, the extent of a shift of central wavelength of emission spectrum of the semiconductor device under change of operating temperature is restrained to be small, that is, several nanometers at most.

[0014] It is desirable that the first multilayer coating has a reflection spectrum which has a maximum value near the central wavelength.

[0015] Further, it is desirable that the optical feedback medium is an optical waveguide or an optical fiber which has a core, a diffraction grating is formed in the core along the optical axis thereof, and the optical feedback medium is arranged to face the semiconductor laser device leaving a space of at least 10mm as measured from the diffraction grating to the emitting surface of the semiconductor laser device.

[0016] Further, it is desirable that the semiconductor laser device has a second multilayer coating formed on its reflecting surface, and the second multilayer coating does not have wavelength selectivity and has a reflectance of 90 to 98%, so that the semiconductor laser device may have a multimode emission spectrum.

[0017] Due to the above described features imparted by the present invention, the semiconductor laser module of the present invention has high power, shows higher stability of emission wavelength under change of temperature, and is suited to be a light source for EDFA pumping.

[0018] Here, an example will be taken in which the optical feedback medium is arranged to face the semiconductor device leaving a space of at least 10mm as measured from the diffraction grating to the emitting surface of the semiconductor device. The semiconductor laser device has a multimode emission spectrum, and its device length is 800 μ m. When the semiconductor laser module operates in a compound resonance mode, the compound resonator length is 800 μ m+10mm (strictly, the length required for reflection by the diffraction grating is included), and the mode distance $\Delta\lambda_2$ is about 0.03nm.

[0019] Here, if the semiconductor laser device is made to operate by itself, the mode distance $\Delta\lambda_1$ is given by $\Delta\lambda_1 \approx \lambda^2 / (2n_{eq} \cdot L_1)$, wherein n_{eq} is the equivalent refractive index of a waveguide of the semiconductor laser device, λ the central wavelength of gain thereof, and L_1 the device length thereof. For example, when the emission wavelength λ of the semiconductor laser device is 1485nm, the equivalent refractive index n_{eq} of the waveguide is 3.4 and the device length L_1 is 300 μ m, the mode distance $\Delta\lambda_1$ is about 1nm, and when the device length L_1 is 800 μ m, the mode distance $\Delta\lambda_1$ is about 0.4nm.

[0020] When mode hop is caused by disturbance such as change in operating temperature or injected current, the central wavelength of emission first hops to an adjacent mode. Therefore, when the device length L_1 of the semiconductor laser device is 300-800 μ m, mode hop happens at intervals of the mode distance $\Delta\lambda_1$ of at least 0.4 to 1nm.

[0021] On the other hand, when the device length L_1 of the semiconductor laser device is 800 μ m and the distance from the emitting surface of the semiconductor laser device to the equivalent reflecting surface of the diffraction grating is 10mm or more, the mode distance $\Delta\lambda_2$ is about 0.03nm or less, which is very small. Therefore, even if mode hop happens in the semiconductor laser device in the semiconductor laser module, the emission wavelength of the semiconductor laser module changes little, and therefore the output power thereof changes very little.

[0022] Therefore, when the semiconductor laser module of the present invention is to be used as a light source for EDFA pumping, multimode emission is more advantageous than single mode emission because change in output power is smaller in multimode emission than in single mode emission.

[0023] Further, the semiconductor laser device is arranged such that the difference between the central wavelength of the gain spectrum thereof and the central wavelength of reflection of the diffraction grating is ± 20 nm or less, and that the half width at half maximum of the gain spectrum band of the semiconductor laser device is 10nm or larger, whether the semiconductor laser device may have bulk structure or quantum well structure.

[0024] Since the semiconductor laser device thus arranged and the optical feedback medium having the diffraction

grating are combined, the semiconductor laser module of the present invention has an emission spectrum showing higher wavelength stability for the following reasons:

[0025] For general explanation, an example of 1480nm-band multimode emission semiconductor laser module in which a semiconductor laser device and a fiber bragg grating (optical feedback medium) are combined will be taken. In this example, let it be supposed that the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain spectrum of the semiconductor laser device is 1465nm, the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the fiber bragg grating (hereinafter referred to as "FBG") is 1480nm, the semiconductor laser device has Gaussian gain distribution, and a first multilayer coating has a fixed reflectance (for example, 1%) not depending on wavelengths.

[0026] In this case, there is a close relationship between the half width at half maximum of the gain spectrum band of the semiconductor laser device and the difference between the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG and the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device.

[0027] Here, the concept of pulling width will be explained.

[0028] In the above example, if the FBG is not provided, the emission wavelength of the semiconductor laser device is about 1465nm. When the semiconductor laser device and the FBG are combined to form a compound resonator type laser, the relationship between the half width at half maximum of the gain spectrum and the pulling width is as shown in FIG. 1. Here, the compound resonator type laser has characteristic parameters as shown in FIG. 1. As indicated in FIG. 1, since the difference ($\lambda_{Fg}-\lambda_{LD}$) between the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG and the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device is 15nm, when the half width at half maximum of gain of the semiconductor device is about 23.5nm or larger as read from graphs of "shorter wavelength side pulling width" and "longer wavelength side pulling width", the emission wavelength of the compound resonator type laser is not 1465nm, but close to 1480nm which is the central wavelength of reflection of the FBG.

[0029] Such is the emission wavelength pulling effect caused by the FBG, and the difference ($\lambda_{Fg}-\lambda_{LD}$) between the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG and the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device is usually called "pulling width".

[0030] Next, the present invention's principle as to how the emission wavelength of the compound resonator type laser formed by combining the semiconductor laser device and the FBG (optical feedback medium) is determined will be explained further in detail based on the relationship between gain and loss which is basic to the laser emission.

[0031] In order that the emission wavelength of the semiconductor laser device can be pulled into the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG, it is necessary that a point of contact PC where a mirror loss curve CMR of the semiconductor laser module formed as the compound resonator type laser is in contact with a spectral curve CGS of net gain by certain injected current or carrier should always be at or near the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG (depending on the half width at half maximum of reflection spectrum of the FBG, about $\pm 2\sim 3$ nm or less) over the whole wavelength region of the semiconductor laser device.

[0032] Here, the gain of gain spectra in FIGS. 2, 4, 7 and 9 means so-called net gain G which is defined by the following expression:

$$G = \Gamma \times g \times L - \alpha \times L \text{ (dimensionless),}$$

wherein Γ is a confinement coefficient of an active layer of the semiconductor laser device, g a gain coefficient (cm^{-1}) (it is to be noted that the half width at half maximum of gain spectrum as mentioned in claims refers to this g), L the device length of the semiconductor laser device (cm), and α an absorption coefficient of the semiconductor laser device (cm^{-1}) relative to the total loss.

[0033] For example, a semiconductor laser module comprising a semiconductor laser device and a FBG will be taken in which the half width at half maximum of gain spectrum of the semiconductor laser device is 30nm, a dielectric multilayer coating, for example, of TiO_2 and SiO_2 showing a reflectance of 1% at the central wavelength of reflection is formed on the emitting surface of the semiconductor laser device, the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device is 1466nm (as shown in FIG. 2) when the emission wavelength of the whole semiconductor laser module is 1485nm, and the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG is 1485nm.

[0034] Using this semiconductor laser module, the central wavelength (nm) of gain of the semiconductor laser device and the emission wavelength (nm) of the whole semiconductor laser module were measured, and it was found that when the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device was within the range of $\lambda_A(1465.87\text{nm})$ to $\lambda_B(1504.34\text{nm})$, the emission wavelength of the whole module was close to 1485nm, as shown in FIG. 3. Since the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG is 1485nm, it turns out that the pulling width at half maximum WHP is 19.13nm ($=1485-1465.87$) on the shorter wavelength side, and 19.34nm ($=1504.34-1485$) on the longer wavelength side.

[0035] As shown in FIG. 2, this semiconductor laser module satisfies, at the central wavelength λ_{Fg} ($=1485\text{nm}$) of reflection of the FBG, the emission condition $G \times R = 1$ (wherein G is a power gain coefficient which represents net gain and R is a power absorption coefficient which represents mirror loss) which means that the mirror loss and the gain of

the semiconductor device agree.

[0036] Therefore, in this semiconductor laser module, emission occurs in a manner that the central wavelength λ_{LD} (=1466nm) of gain of the semiconductor laser device is pulled into the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG.

5 [0037] If in FIG. 2, the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device shifts beyond 1466nm to the shorter wavelength side, the mirror loss curve CMR is no longer in contact with the spectral curve CGS of net gain at or near the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG. In that case, no matter how current or carrier may be injected, the gain condition $G \times R = 1$ can not be satisfied at the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1485nm) of reflection of the FBG, and therefore, in the semiconductor laser module, the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser
10 device is not pulled into the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1485nm) of reflection of the FBG.

[0038] In that case, emission by the semiconductor laser module occurs not in a FBG emission mode but in an ordinary Fabry-Perot (FP) emission mode. FIG. 4 relates to such a case, in which the emission wavelength of the semiconductor laser device is 1465nm. In FIGS. 2 and 4, power ratio curves CR0 (spectral distributions of relative power) are also shown. It is to be noted that the power ratio curve CR0 does not have the same form as the emission spectrum
15 since in the power ratio curve, power ratios at close wavelengths are not separated.

[0039] FIGS. 5 and 6 show spectral distributions of actual output power (mW) of semiconductor laser modules corresponding to FIGS. 2 and 4, respectively.

[0040] FIG. 5 shows that the semiconductor laser module corresponding to FIG. 2 has most of its output power at the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1485nm) of reflection of the FBG. The semiconductor laser module has some output power
20 near the central wavelength λ_{LD} (=1466nm) of gain of the semiconductor laser device, because the reflecting mirror loss curve is close to the gain spectrum at the wavelength λ_{LD} .

[0041] On the other hand, FIG. 6 shows that emission by the semiconductor laser module corresponding to FIG. 4 occurs around the central wavelength λ_{LD} (=1466nm) of gain of the semiconductor laser device. The semiconductor laser module has also some output power near the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1485nm) of reflection of the FBG,
25 because the reflecting mirror loss curve is close to the gain spectrum at the wavelength λ_{Fg} .

[0042] FIG. 7 shows a mirror loss curve CMR, a net gain spectral curve CGS and a power ratio curve CR0 of a semiconductor laser module comprising a semiconductor laser device and a FBG in which the half width at half maximum of gain spectrum of the semiconductor laser device is 30nm, a dielectric multilayer coating of, for example, TiO_2 and SiO_2 showing a reflectance of 1% at the central wavelength of reflection is formed on the emitting surface of the semiconductor laser device, the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device is 1479nm when the emission wavelength of the whole semiconductor laser module is 1460nm, and the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG is 1460nm.
30

[0043] Here, a point PC where the mirror loss curve CMR is in contact with the net gain spectral curve CGS is at the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1460nm) of reflection of the FBG, and the central wavelength λ_{Fg} is on the shorter wavelength side of the central wavelength λ_{LD} (=1479nm) of gain of the semiconductor laser device. In this semiconductor laser module, the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device is pulled into the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG.
35

[0044] As is clear from FIG. 8 which shows a relationship between the central wavelength (nm) of gain of the semiconductor laser device and the emission wavelength (nm) of the whole module, when the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device is within the range of λ_A (1440.63nm) to λ_B (1479.38nm), the emission wavelength of the whole semiconductor laser module is pulled into the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1460nm) of reflection of the FBG.
40

[0045] On the other hand, FIG. 9 shows that when the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of the semiconductor laser device shifts beyond 1479.38nm to the longer wavelength side, emission by the semiconductor laser module occurs mainly in a FP emission mode, not in a FBG emission mode.
45

[0046] For example, when the emission wavelength of the semiconductor laser device is 1480nm, the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain thereof is 1480nm. Therefore, the mirror loss curve CMR is not in contact with the net gain spectral curve CGS at or near the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1460nm) of reflection of the FBG. Therefore, the semiconductor laser module satisfies the gain condition $G \times R = 1$ not at the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1460nm) of reflection of the FBG
50 but at the central wavelength λ_{LD} (=1480nm) of gain of the semiconductor laser device, and therefore, the emission wavelength of the whole semiconductor laser module is not pulled into the central wavelength λ_{Fg} (=1460nm) of reflection of the FBG. FIGS. 10 and 11 show spectral distributions of actual output power (mW) of the semiconductor laser modules corresponding to FIGS. 7 and 9, respectively.

[0047] As is understood from FIGS. 2 to 11, in connection with increasing stability of emission wavelength, there is a very close relationship among the width of gain spectrum of the semiconductor laser device, a difference between the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG and the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain spectrum of the semiconductor laser device, and the pulling width at half maximum WHP.
55

[0048] When the semiconductor laser module comprising the semiconductor laser device and the optical feedback

medium has the above described features, a large pulling width can be secured. Further, when the difference between the reflectance R_{GL} of the diffraction grating at the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection and the reflectance R_1 of the first multilayer coating formed on the emitting surface satisfies a condition $R_{GL} - R_1 \geq -2\%$, emission by the semiconductor laser module occurs mainly in a FBG emission mode, so that the output power is more stabilized.

5 [0049] Further, when optical coupling means is provided between the emitting surface of the semiconductor laser device and the optical feedback medium (waveguide or fiber having the optical grating therein) to have the power coupling efficiency of 50% or higher, the pulling width is prevented from narrowing, so that the semiconductor laser module is maintained as the compound resonator type laser module. It is to be noted that even if various parameters relating to the semiconductor laser module can be held at fixed values, a drop in the power coupling efficiency directly affects the

10 wavelength pulling property.
[0050] In order that the wavelength pulling property may not drop beyond its limit, the semiconductor laser module needs to have the power coupling efficiency of 50% or higher. For example, the semiconductor laser module for which the parameters are determined as shown in FIG. 1 shows the optical coupling efficiency of 75%. If the power coupling efficiency is 100%, the pulling width at half maximum WHP is about 21.6nm, and if the power coupling efficiency is 50%,
15 the pulling width at half maximum W_{HP} is about 16.6nm. The difference is so large as about 5nm.

[0051] In an ordinary pump laser for exciting an EDFA, output power is very important. It is said that in order to meet demands in various communication systems, an ordinary pump laser for exciting an EDFA needs to have output power of about 120mW.

20 [0052] On the other hand, a laser device to be used in an ordinary semiconductor laser has a limit of output power. Further, a pump laser having a FBG has higher wavelength stability, but due to the attached FBG, a certain drop in output power as compared with a pump laser not having a FBG is inevitable. In order that a pump laser having a FBG may have the output power of 120mW or higher, it is desirable that the power coupling efficiency is 50% or higher, provided that parameters for the pump laser are so determined that the pump laser can be manufactured easily.

25 Brief Description of the Drawings

[0053]

30 FIG. 1 is a characteristic diagram showing a relationship between half width at half maximum of gain of a semiconductor laser device and pulling width, which is provided for explaining the pulling width in a semiconductor laser module according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a spectral characteristic diagram showing a relationship among mirror loss, gain, power ratio, a central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of an optical feedback medium, and a central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of a semiconductor laser device in a semiconductor laser module according to the present invention, wherein emission occurs
35 in a manner that the central wavelength of gain of the semiconductor laser device is pulled into the central wavelength of reflection of a fiber bragg grating;

FIG. 3 is a characteristic diagram relating to a semiconductor laser module corresponding to FIG. 2, and showing a relationship between central wavelength of gain of a semiconductor laser device and emission wavelength of the semiconductor laser module;

40 FIG. 4 is a spectral characteristic diagram showing a relationship among mirror loss, gain, power ratio, a central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of an optical feedback medium, and a central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of a semiconductor laser device in a semiconductor laser module according to the present invention, wherein the central wavelength of gain of the semiconductor laser device is not pulled into the central wavelength of reflection of a fiber bragg grating;

45 FIG. 5 is a spectral distribution diagram of actual output power of a semiconductor laser module corresponding to FIG. 2;

FIG. 6 is a spectral distribution diagram of actual output power of a semiconductor laser module corresponding to FIG. 4;

50 FIG. 7 is a spectral characteristic diagram showing a relationship among mirror loss, gain, power ratio, a central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of an optical feedback medium, and a central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of a semiconductor laser device in another semiconductor laser module according to the present invention, wherein emission occurs in a manner that the central wavelength of gain of the semiconductor laser device is pulled into the central wavelength of reflection of a fiber bragg grating;

55 FIG. 8 is a characteristic diagram relating to a semiconductor laser module corresponding to FIG. 7, and showing a relationship between central wavelength of gain of a semiconductor laser device and emission wavelength of the semiconductor laser module;

FIG. 9 is a spectral characteristic diagram showing a relationship among mirror loss, gain, power ratio, a central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of an optical feedback medium, and a central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain of a semicon-

ductor laser device in another semiconductor laser module according to the present invention, wherein the central wavelength of gain of the semiconductor laser device is not pulled into the central wavelength of reflection of a fiber bragg grating;

FIG. 10 is a spectral distribution diagram of actual output power of a semiconductor laser module corresponding to FIG. 7;

FIG. 11 is a spectral distribution diagram of actual output power of a semiconductor laser module corresponding to FIG. 9;

FIG. 12 is an illustration showing schematic structure of a semiconductor laser module according to the present invention;

FIG. 13 is a diagram showing a reflection spectrum of a first multilayer coating formed on an emitting surface of a semiconductor laser device included in the semiconductor laser module shown in FIG. 12;

FIG. 14 is a diagram showing reflection spectra of three kinds of first multilayer coatings, each of which is a dielectric multilayer coating and shows wavelength dependency;

FIG. 15 is a diagram showing a reflection spectrum of a second multilayer coating formed on a reflecting surface of a semiconductor laser device included in the semiconductor laser module shown in FIG. 12;

FIGS. 16A to 16D show spectra of fiber output (dBm) of a semiconductor laser module of a first embodiment under operating temperatures of 5, 15, 25 and 35°C, respectively;

FIGS. 17A to 17C show spectra of fiber output (dBm) of a semiconductor laser module of a first embodiment under operating temperatures of 45, 55, and 65°C, respectively;

FIGS. 18A to 18D show spectra of fiber output (dBm) of a semiconductor laser module of a second embodiment under operating temperatures of 5, 15, 25 and 35°C, respectively; and

FIGS. 19A to 19C show spectra of fiber output (dBm) of a semiconductor laser module of a second embodiment under operating temperatures of 45, 55, and 65°C, respectively;

Best Mode of Carrying out the Invention

[0054] Embodiments of the present invention will be described based on FIGS. 12 to 19.

Embodiment 1

[0055] As shown in FIG. 12, a semiconductor laser module (hereinafter referred to simply as "module") 1 comprises a semiconductor laser device 2, an FBG 3 which is arranged to face the semiconductor laser device 2 leaving a predetermined space therebetween, and optical coupling means 4 arranged between the laser device 2 and the FBG 3.

[0056] The semiconductor laser device 2 has an emitting surface 2a from which exited light is emitted, and a reflecting surface 2b which is opposite to the emitting surface 2a. On the emitting surface 2a of the semiconductor laser device 2 is formed a low reflectance multilayer coating 2c having a reflectance of 1%. On the reflecting surface 2b thereof is formed a high reflectance multilayer coating 2d having a reflectance of 98%.

[0057] The low reflectance multilayer coating 2c is formed of dielectric materials such as TiO_2 and SiO_2 . As shown in FIG. 13, the low reflectance multilayer coating 2c has a reflection spectrum in the form of a curve having minimum values VMIN1 and VMIN2 on both sides of the central wavelength λ_C at which the reflectance takes a maximum value. The low reflectance multilayer coating 2c is formed, for example, by depositing, on the front surface of the semiconductor laser device 2, thin layers of TiO_2 and SiO_2 alternately in this order to have a six-layer structure. By varying the optical thickness of each layer (details such as composition, optical thickness and the like are shown in tables 1 to 3), three kinds of multilayer coatings A to C having spectral distributions of reflectance as shown in FIG. 14 are formed.

Table 1

Multilayer coating A		Optical thickness (nm)	Refractive index
Number of layers	6	360	2.3
		270	1.52
		180	2.3
		180	1.52
		270	2.3
		360	1.52

Table 1 (continued)

Multilayer coating A		Optical thickness (nm)	Refractive index
Refractive index of base		3.4	
Refractive index of medium		1	
Start wavelength (nm)		1000	
End wavelength (nm)		2000	
Central wavelength (nm)		1440	
Number of beams		1	
Incident angle (deg)		0	

Table 2

Multilayer coating B		Optical thickness (nm)	Refractive index
Number of layers	6	365	2.3
		273.75	1.52
		146	2.3
		182.5	1.52
		0.75	2.3
		365	1.52
Refractive index of base		3.4	
Refractive index of medium		1	
Start wavelength (nm)		1000	
End wavelength (nm)		2000	
Central wavelength (nm)		1460	
Number of beams		1	
Incident angle (deg)		0	

Table 3

Multilayer coating C		Optical thickness (nm)	Refractive index
Number of layers	6	365	2.3
		273.75	1.52
		0.425	2.3
		146	1.52
		273.75	2.3
		365	1.52
Refractive index of base		3.4	
Refractive index of medium		1	

Table 3 (continued)

Multilayer coating C		Optical thickness (nm)	Refractive index
Start wavelength (nm)	1000		
End wavelength (nm)	2000		
Central wavelength (nm)	1460		
Number of beams	1		
Incident angle (deg)	0		

[0058] The high reflectance multilayer coating 2d is formed of dielectric materials such as SiO₂ and amorphous silicon (α -Si) to have seven layers in the order of SiO₂/ α -Si/.../SiO₂. Each layer has an optical thickness of $\lambda/4$ ($\lambda=1480\text{nm}$). As shown in FIG. 15, the high reflectance multilayer coating 2d has an almost flat reflection spectrum and does not show wavelength selectivity in the wavelength range of 1400 to 1600nm.

[0059] The semiconductor laser device 2 has a multimode emission spectrum, and is arranged such that a difference between the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain spectrum of the semiconductor laser device 2 and the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection of the FBG 3 is $\pm 20\text{nm}$ or less, and the half width at half maximum of gain spectrum of the semiconductor laser device 2 is 10nm or more.

[0060] The FBG 3 is an optical feedback medium for feeding the optical power emitted from the emitting surface 2a of the semiconductor laser device 2 back to the semiconductor laser device based on a predetermined coupling efficiency and for emitting the optical power. A grating 3b is formed in a core 3a of an optical fiber by varying a refractive index along the optical axis thereof. The grating 3b is arranged such that the reflectance at the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection is 4%.

[0061] The optical coupling means 4 is formed using any of a conventional two-lens confocal compound lens system, a rounded fiber, and a wedge-lensed fiber and the like.

[0062] In a semiconductor laser module 1 having the above described structure, a semiconductor laser device 2 was arranged to face a FBG 3 leaving a space of 12mm therebetween. Here, data on the used semiconductor laser device 2 was as follows: The device length was 800 μm , the refractive index n of a waveguide was 3.4, the absorption coefficient was 15(cm^{-1}), the width of an active layer was 2.5 μm , the thickness of the active layer was 20nm, and the confinement coefficient of the active layer was 2.5×10^{-2} . Bias current of 500mA was injected to the semiconductor laser device 2 of the semiconductor laser module 1, and the fiber output (dBm) was measured at every 10°C of the operating temperature which was varied in the range of 5 to 65°C.

[0063] Data on the FBG 3 was as follows: The coupling efficiency of the FBG 3 and the semiconductor laser device 2 was 75%, the refractive index of a core 3a is 1.54, the transmission loss was 0.2 (dB/km), the distance between the end face of the FBG 3 and a grating 3b was 10cm, the length of the grating 3b was 1.0cm, the central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection was 1463nm, the half width at half maximum of reflection spectrum was 4.0nm, and the reflectance at the central wavelength λ_{Fg} was 4%.

[0064] Data on the semiconductor laser module 1 was as follows: the effective recombination coefficient was about 1.5×10^{-10} ($\text{cm}^3/\text{sec.}$), the Auger effect recombination coefficient was about 7.5×10^{-29} ($\text{cm}^6/\text{sec.}$), spontaneous carrier emission duration was about 1.3 (nsec.), the differential gain was about 3.5×10^{-16} (cm^2), the transparent carrier density was about 1.0×10^{18} (cm^{-3}), the gain bandwidth was 30 (nm), the central wavelength λ_{LD} of gain at the temperature of 25°C was 1472nm, the internal quantum efficiency relating to the injected bias current was 0.95.

[0065] The result of measurement performed under the above conditions are shown in FIGS. 16A to 17C. FIGS. 16A to 16D show spectral distributions of fiber output (dBm) at the temperatures of 5, 15, 25 and 35°C, respectively, and FIGS. 17A to 17C show spectral distributions of fiber output (dBm) at the temperatures of 45, 55 and 65°C, respectively. It is to be noted that the shown output power is lower than the real output power of the laser, because the shown output power includes loss due to an output power spectral value measuring instrument inserted in the laser.

[0066] As is clear from FIGS. 16A to 17C, the semiconductor laser module 1 has an output power spectrum which does not depend on temperature, shows emission wavelength stability under the change of temperature, and has output power high enough to serve as a light source for exciting an EDFA.

Embodiment 2

[0067] In the semiconductor laser module 1 of embodiment 1, the condition relating to the reflectance of the FBG was changed from 4% to 1%. Bias current of 500mA was injected to the semiconductor laser device 2, and the fiber output power (dBm) was measured at every 10°C of the operating temperature which was varied in the range of 5 to 65°C.

[0068] The result of measurement of the fiber output are shown in FIGS. 18A to 19C. FIGS. 18A to 18D show spectral

distributions of fiber output (dBm) at the temperatures of 5, 15, 25 and 35°C, respectively, and FIGS. 19A to 19C show spectral distributions of fiber output (dBm) at the temperatures of 45, 55 and 65°C, respectively.

[0069] As is clear from FIGS. 18A to 19C, even when the measurement condition was changed as described above, it was found that the semiconductor laser module 1 had an output power spectrum which did not depend on temperature, showed emission wavelength stability under the change of temperature, and had output power high enough to serve as a light source for exciting an EDFA.

[0070] In the present specification, two embodiments have been described. However, as is understood from the above description, numerous embodiments can be made by appropriately changing conditions such as spectral properties of the multilayer coating on the front surface of the semiconductor laser device, the full width of the central wavelength of reflection of the FBG, the reflectance at the central wavelength of reflection of the FBG, the length of the semiconductor laser device or the like.

Industrial applicability

[0071] A first aspect of the present invention can provide a semiconductor laser module which has high power, shows high stability of emission wavelength under change of temperature, and is suited to be a light source for exciting an EDFA.

[0072] With second to fifth aspects of the present invention, change in emission wavelength of the semiconductor laser module can be restrained, even if mode hop happens. Thus, the semiconductor laser module whose output power is high and changes very little and which shows higher stability of emission wavelength under change of temperature and is suited to be a light source for exciting an EDFA can be obtained.

[0073] With sixth and seventh aspects of the present invention, the semiconductor laser module showing higher stability of emission wavelength can be obtained.

[0074] With eighth and ninth aspects of the present invention, the semiconductor laser module which operates mainly in a FBG emission mode and therefore shows higher stability of output power can be obtained.

Claims

1. A semiconductor laser module comprising a semiconductor laser device having an emitting surface from which excited light is emitted and a reflecting surface opposite to said emitting surface, and an optical feedback medium for feeding optical power emitted from said emitting surface of said semiconductor laser device back to said semiconductor laser device based on a predetermined coupling efficiency and emitting part of said optical power, wherein
 said semiconductor laser device has a first multilayer coating formed on said emitting surface and having a reflectance of 10^{-4} to 10% at a central wavelength of reflection, and said first multilayer coating has a reflection spectrum in the form of a curve having minimum values on both sides of the central wavelength of reflection.
2. A semiconductor laser module according to claim 1, wherein said first multilayer coating has a reflection spectrum which has a maximum value near the central wavelength of reflection.
3. A semiconductor laser module according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said optical feedback medium is an optical waveguide or an optical fiber which has a core, a diffraction grating is formed in said core along an optical axis of said core, and said optical feedback medium is arranged to face said semiconductor laser device leaving a space of at least 10mm as measured from said diffraction grating to said emitting surface of the semiconductor laser device.
4. A semiconductor laser module according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein said semiconductor laser device has a second multilayer coating formed on said reflecting surface, and said second multilayer coating does not have wavelength selectivity and has a reflectance of 90 to 98%.
5. A semiconductor laser module according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein said semiconductor laser device has a multimode emission spectrum.
6. A semiconductor laser module according to any one of claims 3 to 5, wherein the difference between a central wavelength of gain spectrum of said semiconductor laser device and a central wavelength of reflection of said diffraction grating is ± 20 nm or less.

7. A semiconductor laser module according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the half width at half maximum of gain spectrum band of said semiconductor laser device is 10nm or larger.
8. A semiconductor laser module according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the difference between a reflectance R_{GL} of said diffraction grating at a central wavelength λ_{Fg} of reflection and a reflectance R_1 of said first multilayer coating at a central wavelength of reflection satisfies a condition $R_{GL} - R_1 \geq -2\%$.
9. A semiconductor laser module according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein optical coupling means having a power coupling efficiency of 50% or higher is provided between said emitting surface of said semiconductor laser device and said optical feedback medium.

FIG. 1

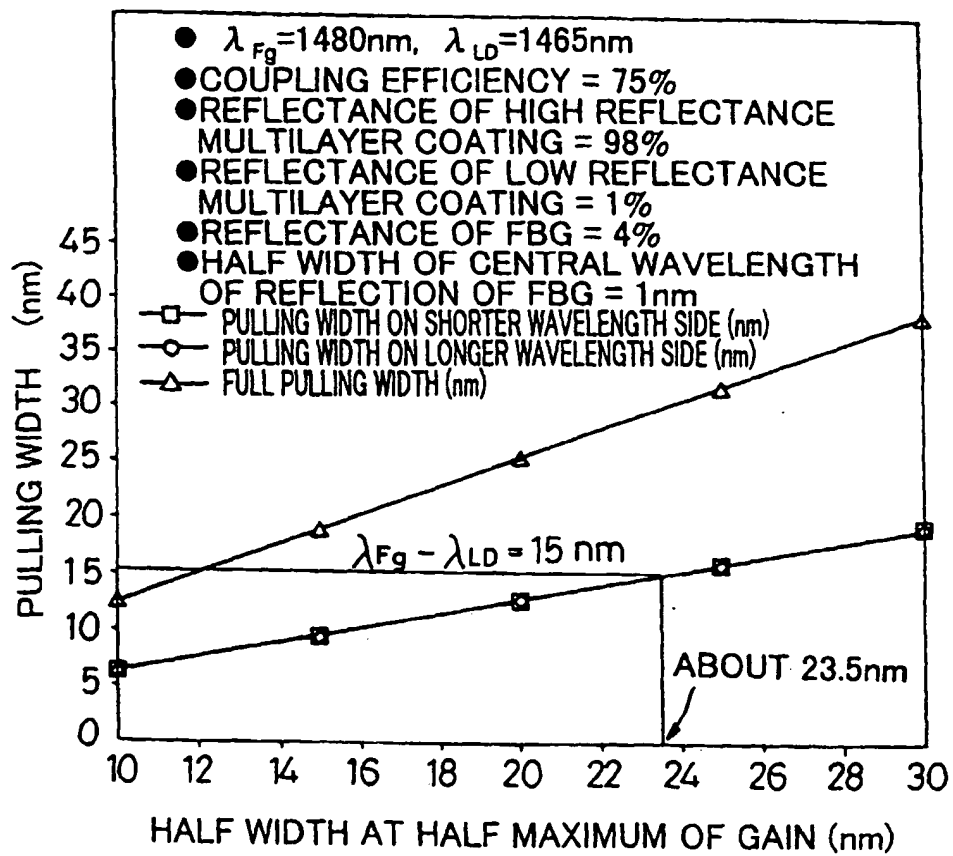


FIG. 2

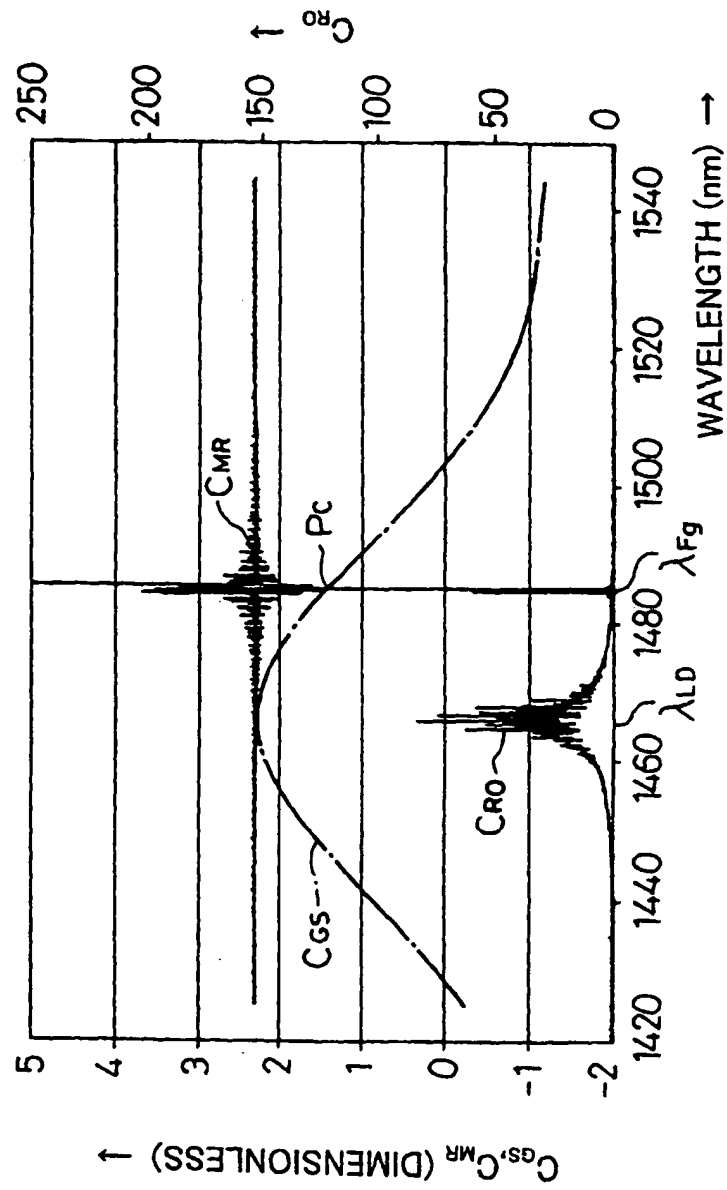


FIG. 3

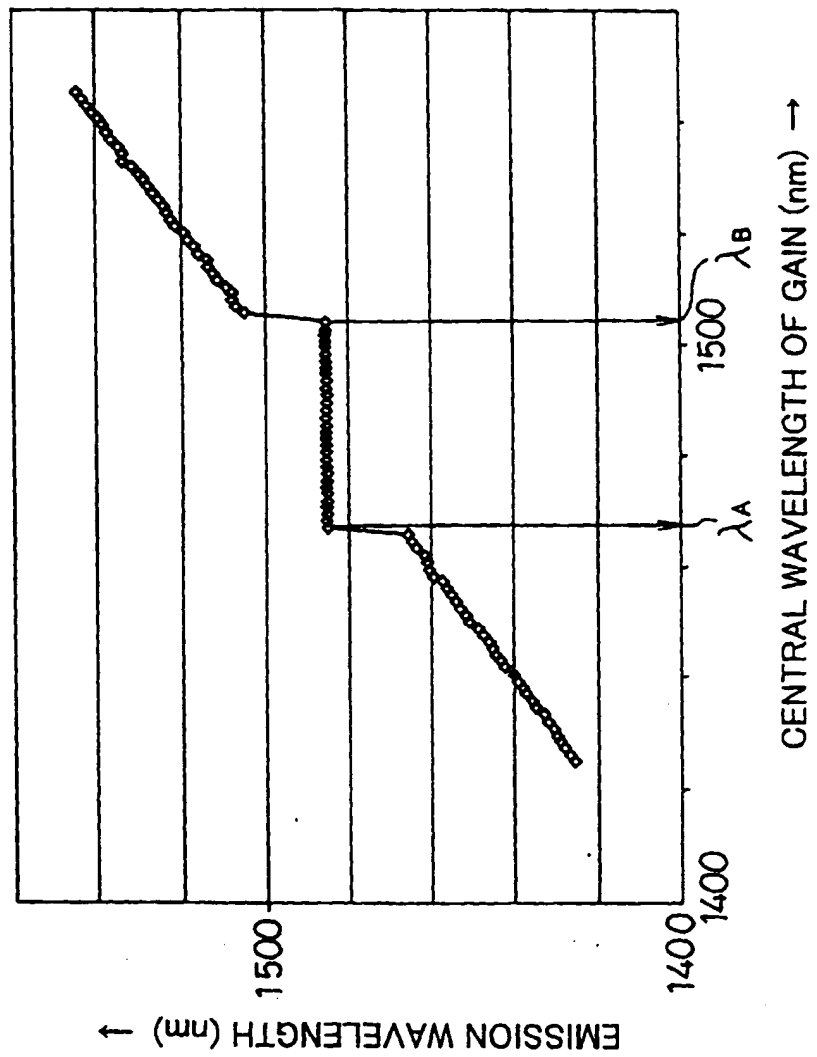


FIG. 4

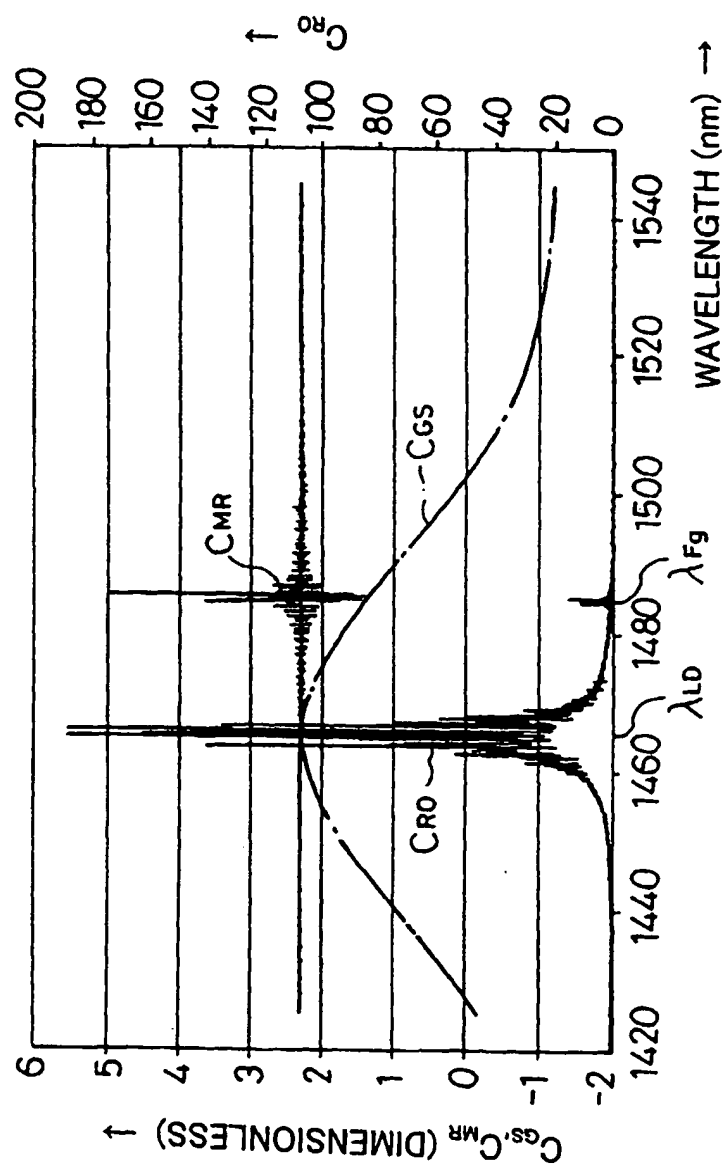


FIG. 5

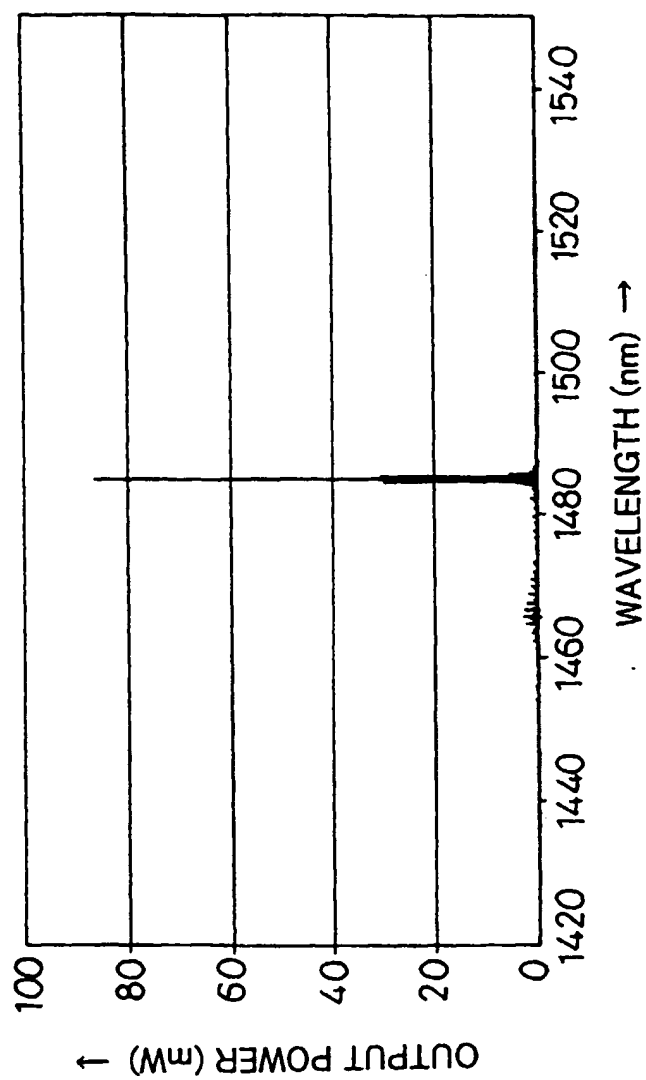


FIG. 6

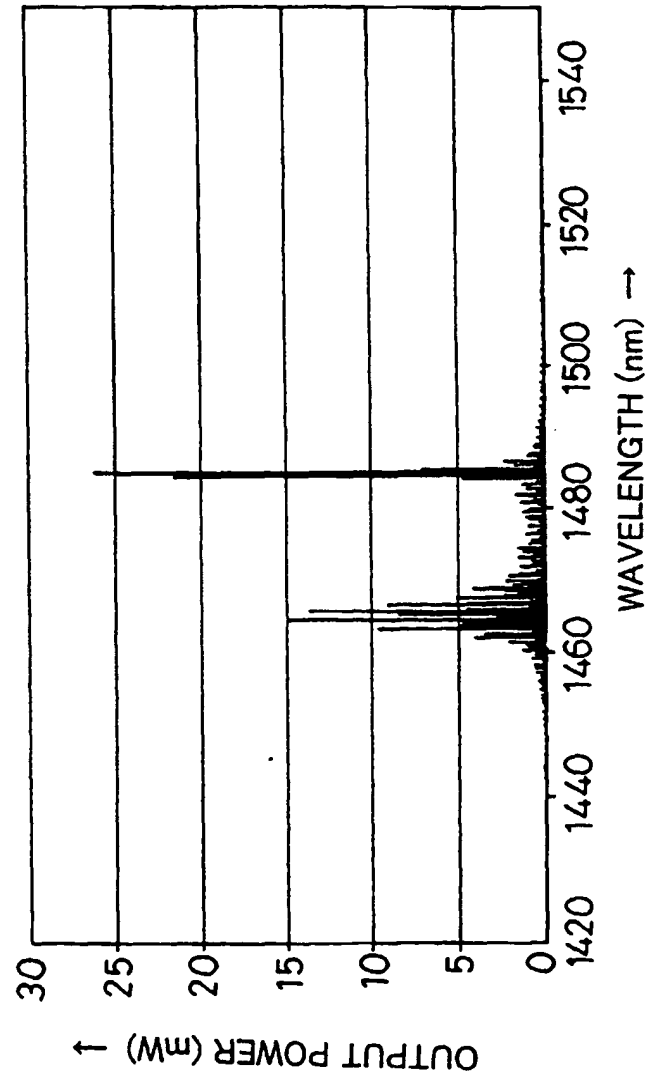


FIG. 7

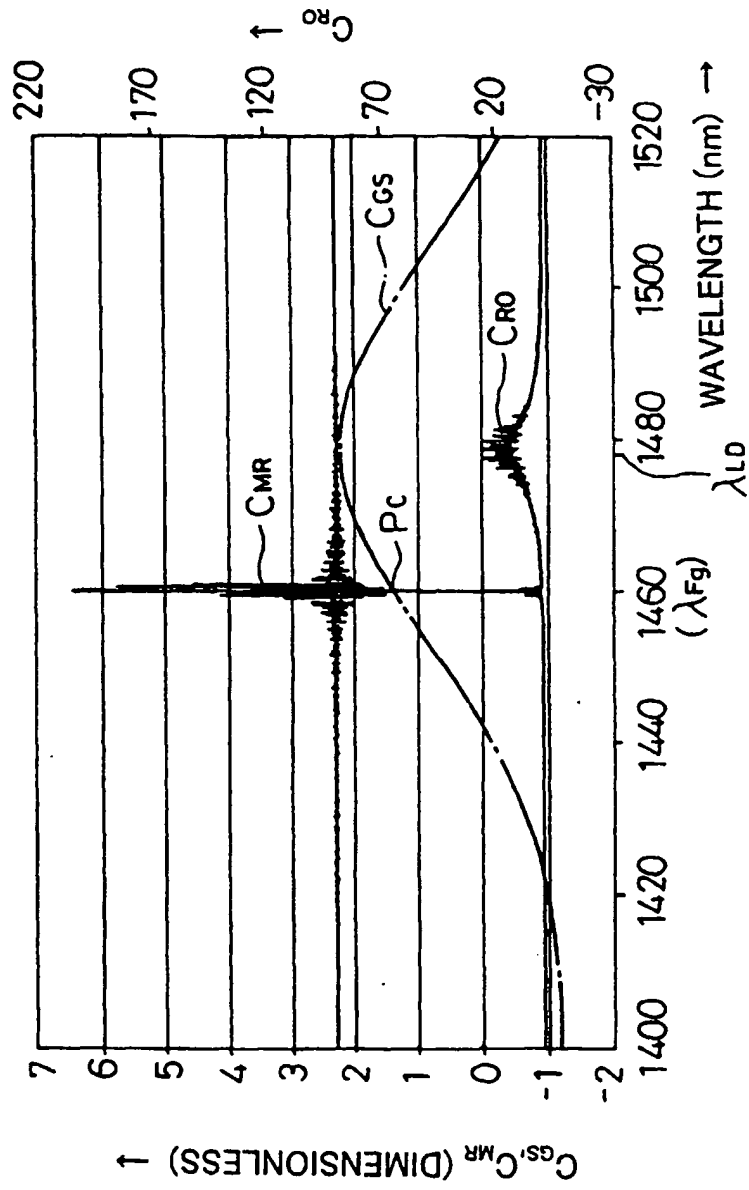


FIG. 8

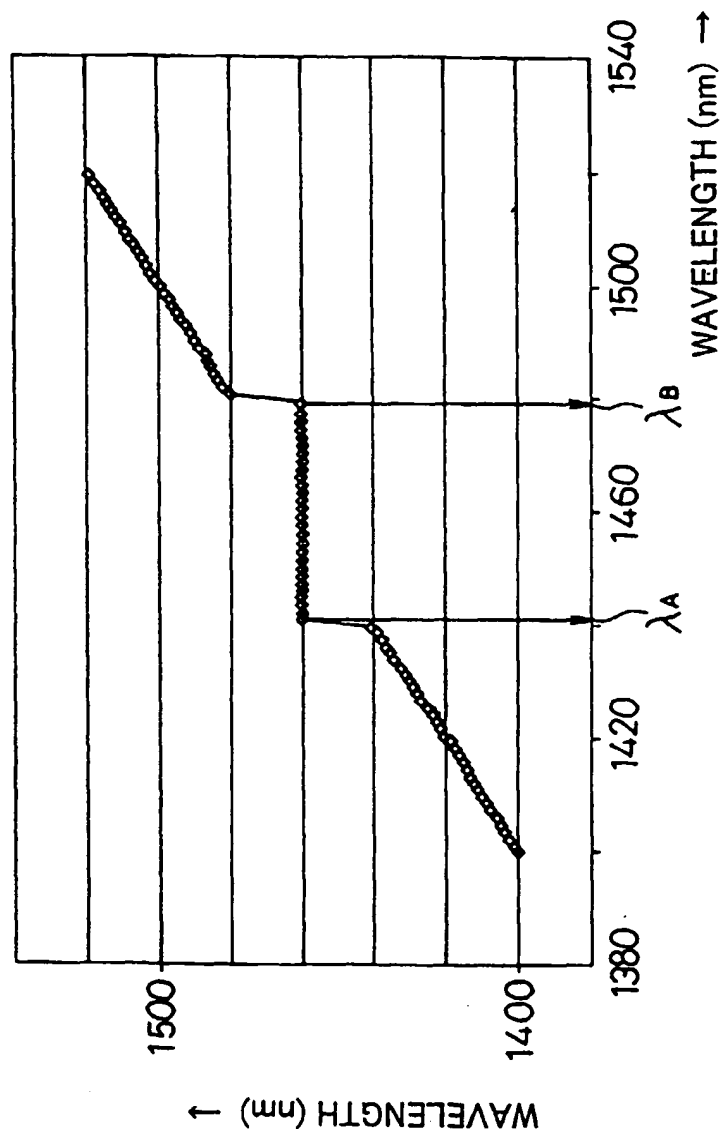


FIG. 9

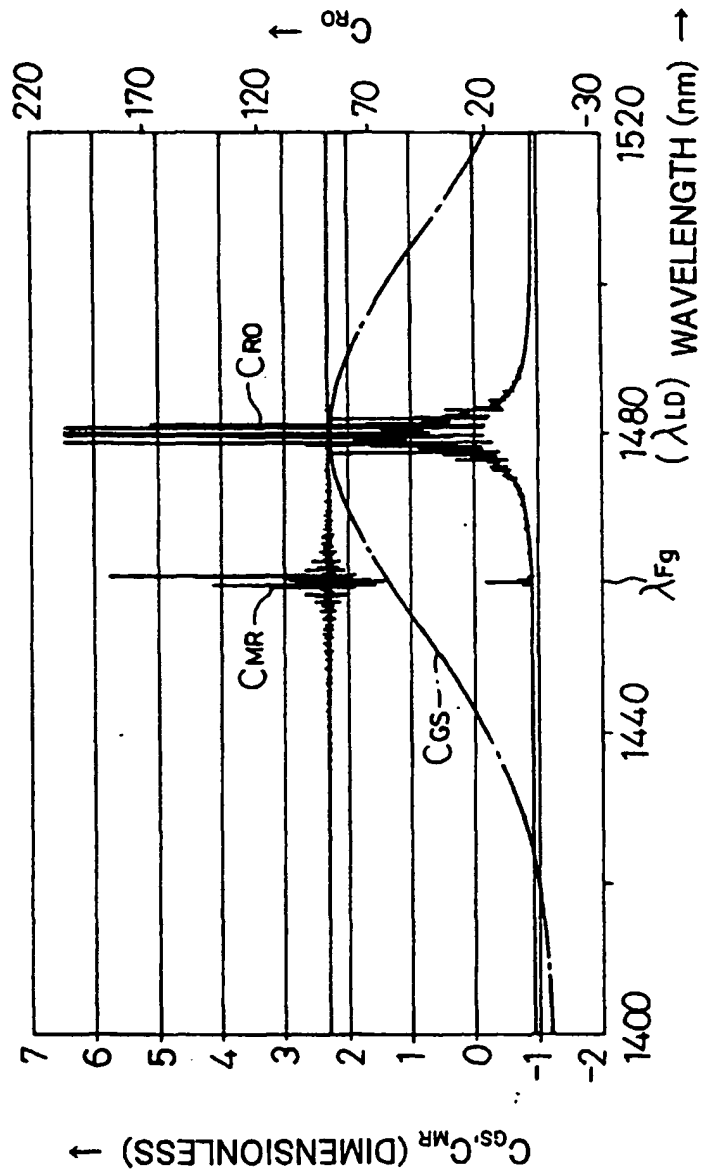


FIG. 10

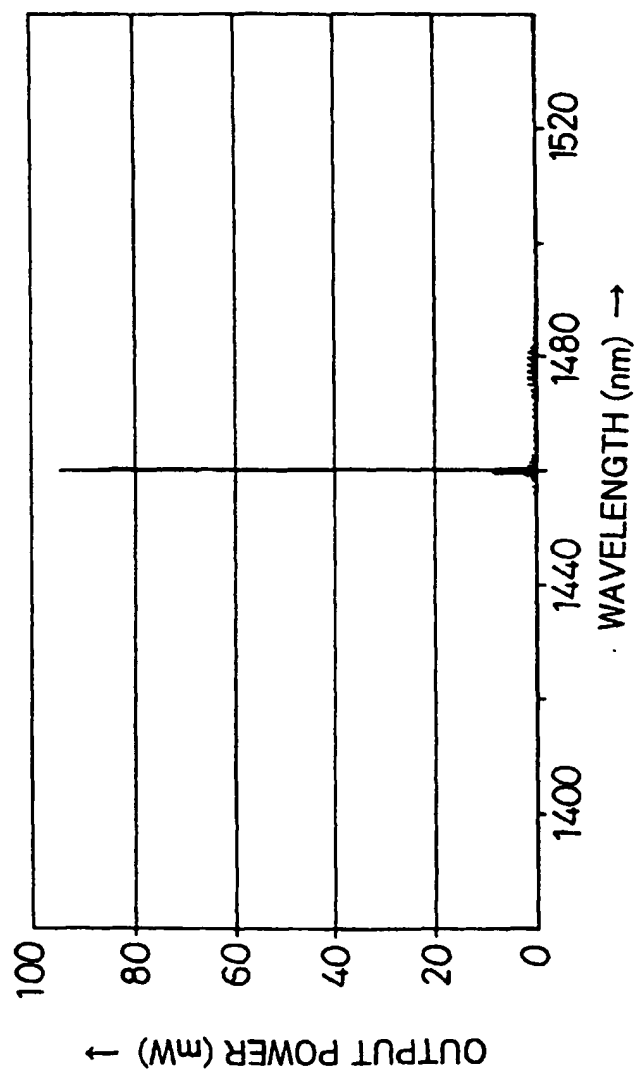


FIG. 11

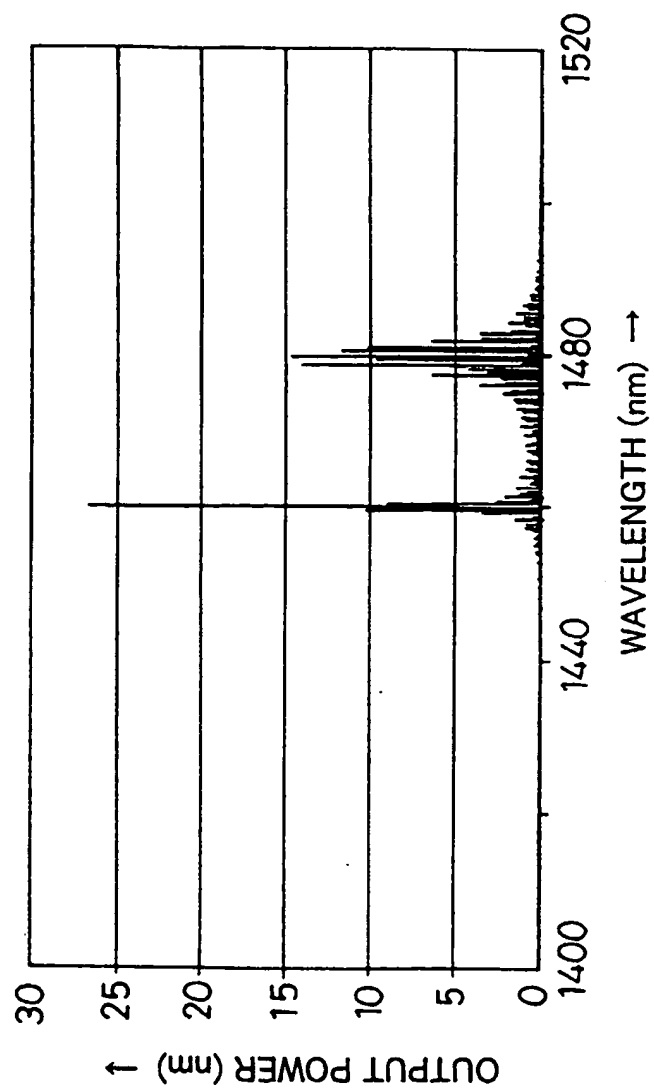


FIG. 12

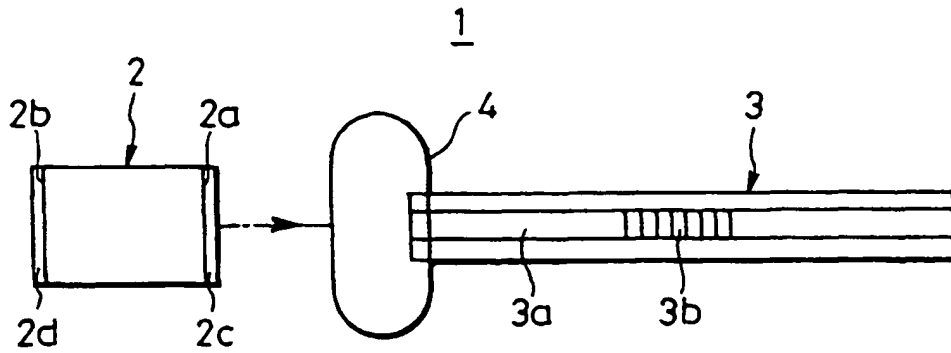


FIG. 13

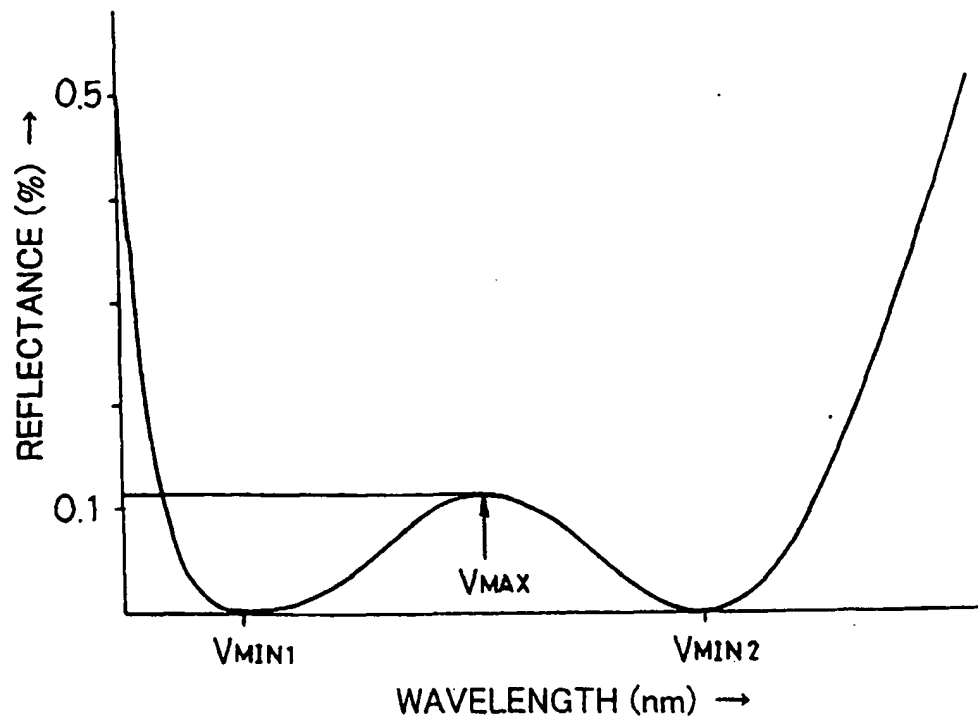


FIG. 14

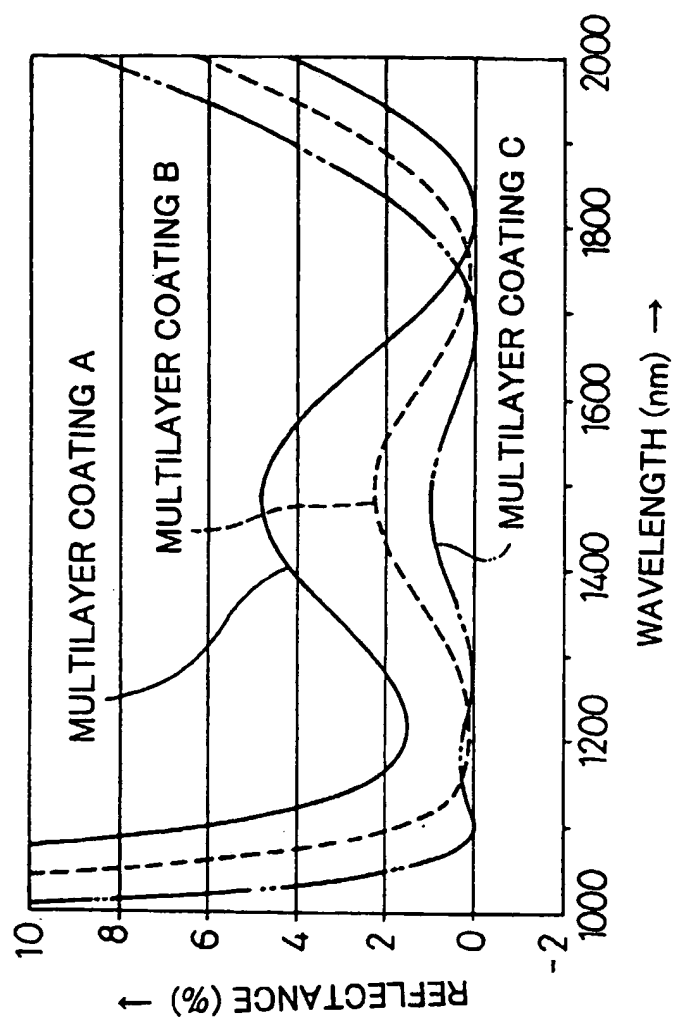


FIG. 15

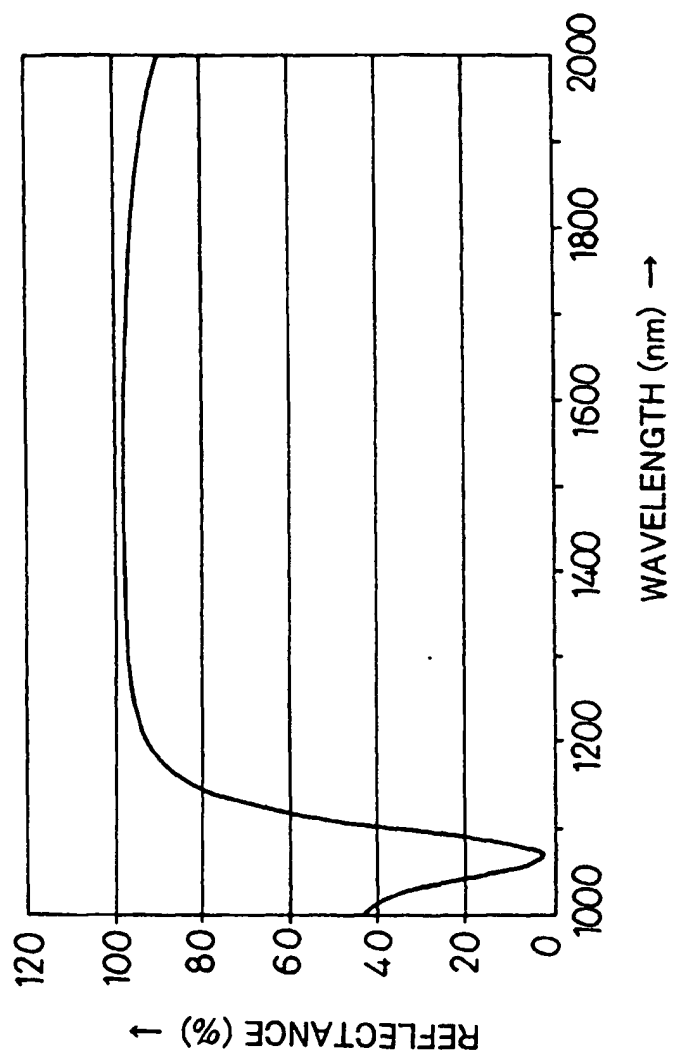


FIG. 16A

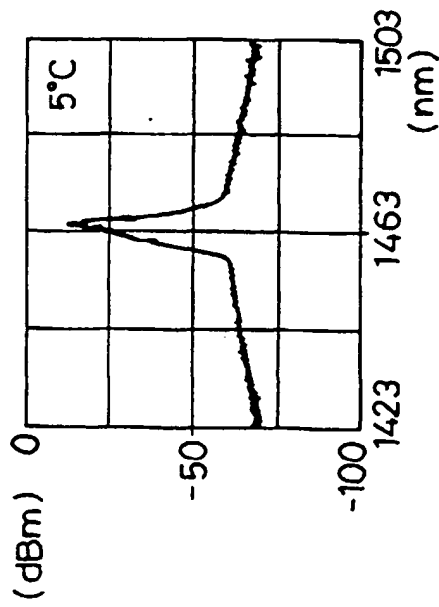


FIG. 16B

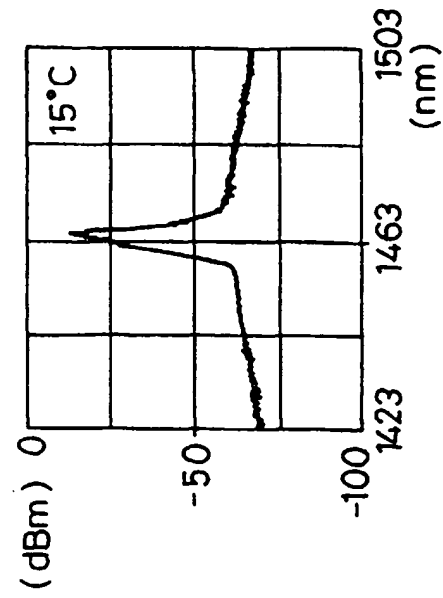


FIG. 16C

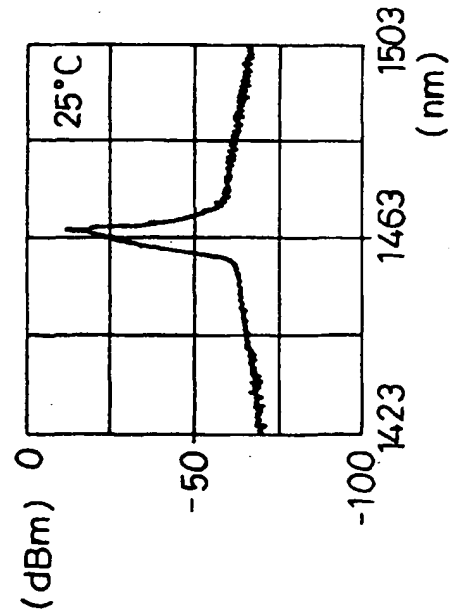


FIG. 16D

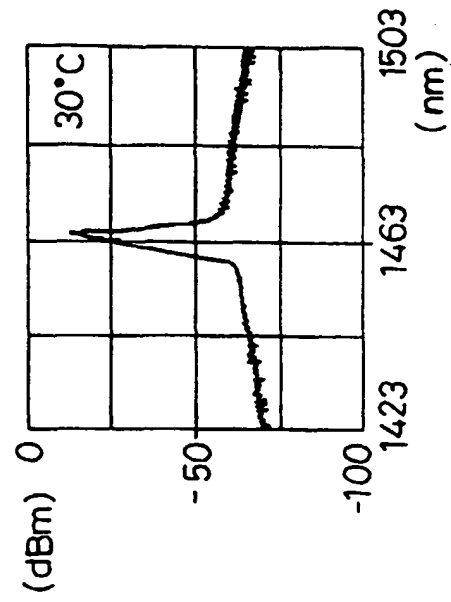


FIG. 17A

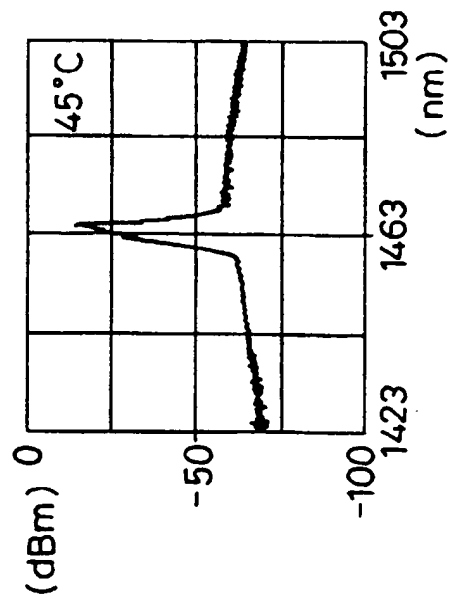


FIG. 17B

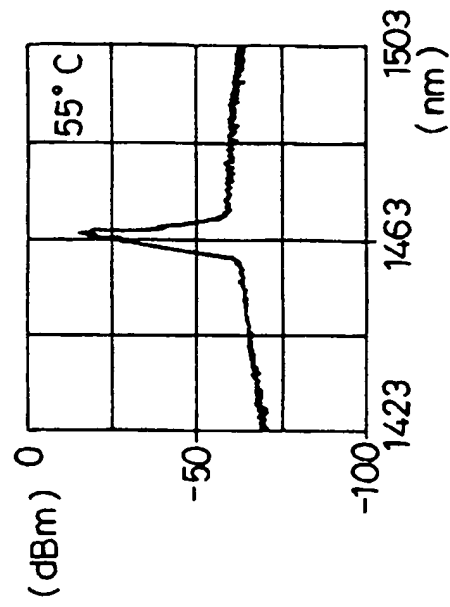


FIG. 17C

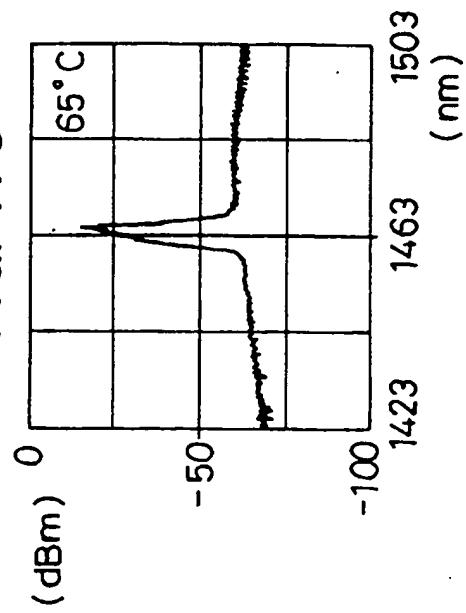


FIG. 18A

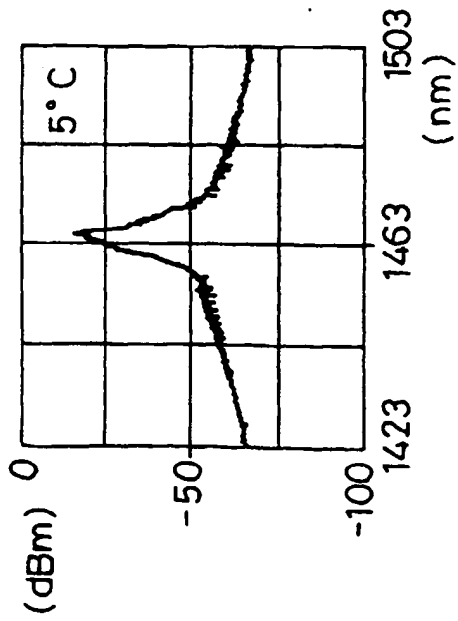


FIG. 18B

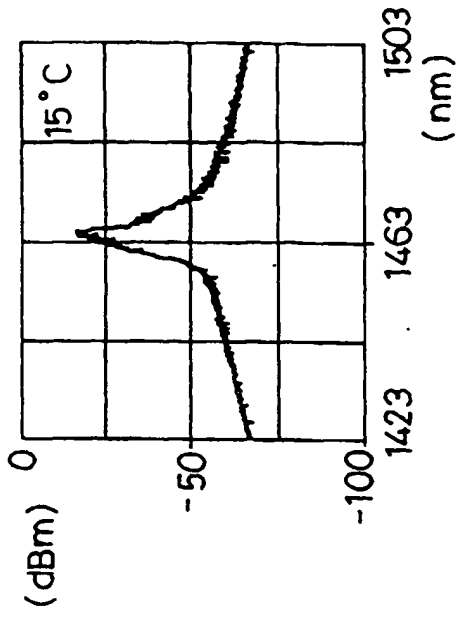


FIG. 18C

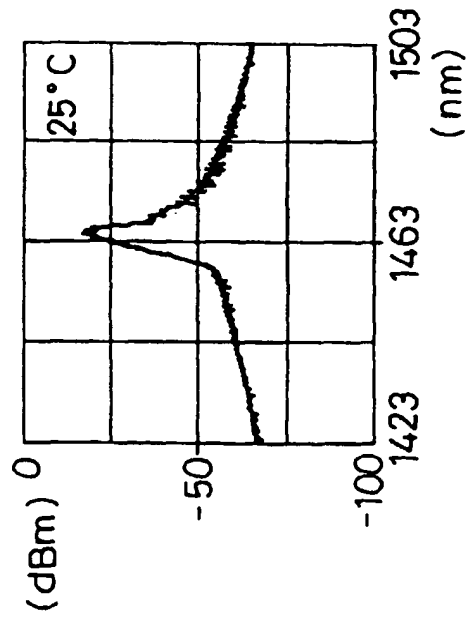


FIG. 18D

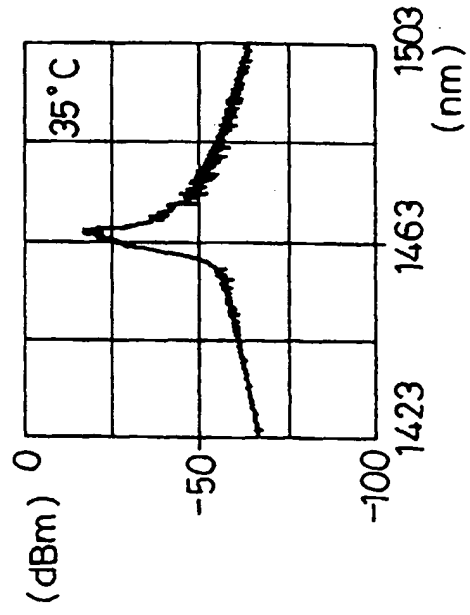


FIG. 19A

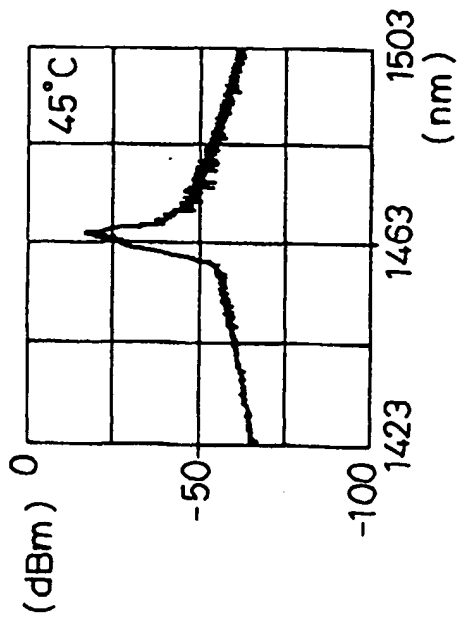


FIG. 19B

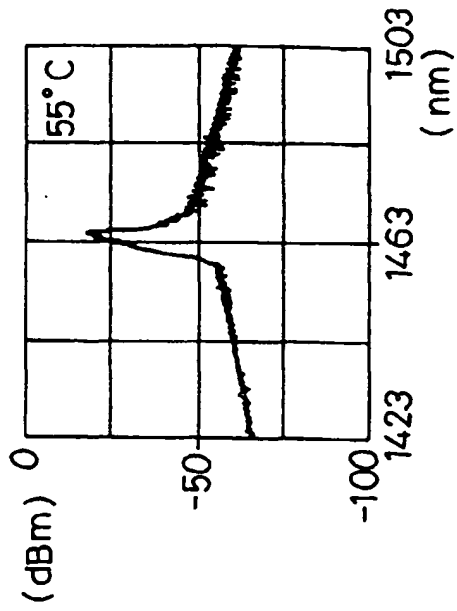
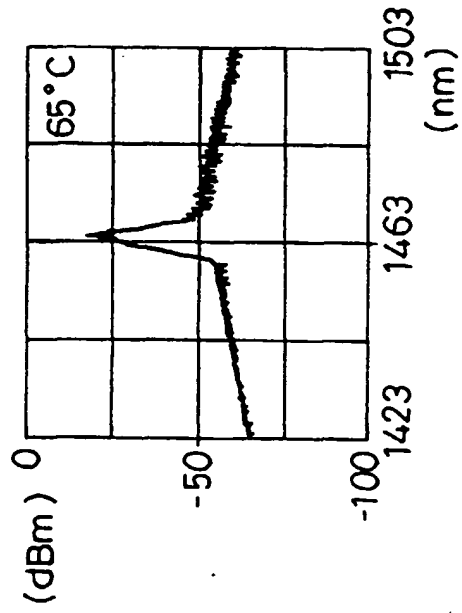


FIG. 19C



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP99/00267

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER Int.Cl. ⁶ H01S3/18		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) Int.Cl. ⁶ H01S3/18		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1922-1996 Toroku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1994-1999 Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971-1999 Jitsuyo Shinan Toroku Koho 1996-1999		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) JICST File (JOIS)		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	JP, 54-150989, A (NEC Corp.), 27 November, 1979 (27. 11. 79), Full text ; Figs. 1 to 3 (Family: none)	1-9
Y	JP, 09-162495, A (Sumitomo Electric Industries, Ltd.), 20 June, 1997 (20. 06. 97), Full text ; Figs. 1 to 11 (Family: none)	1-9
A	JP, 05-082899, A (Omron Corp.), 2 April, 1993 (02. 04. 93), Full text ; Figs. 1 to 8 (Family: none)	1-9
A	JP, 09-129979, A (The Furukawa Electric Co., Ltd.), 16 May, 1997 (16. 05. 97), Full text ; Figs. 1 to 8 (Family: none)	1-9
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reasons (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 20 April, 1999 (20. 04. 99)		Date of mailing of the international search report 27 April, 1999 (27. 04. 99)
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office		Authorized officer
Facsimile No.		Telephone No.

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1992)